

THE
Apostolical Institution
OF
EPISCOPACY
DEMONSTRATED.

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SECT. I.



IF we abstract from *Episcopal Government* all accidentals, and consider only what is essential and necessary to it; we shall finde in it no more but this: An appointment of one man of eminent sanctity and sufficiency to have the care of all the Churches, within a certain Precinct or Diocess; and furnishing him with authority (not absolute or arbitrary, but regulated and bounded by Laws, and moderated by joyning to him a convenient number of assistants) to the intent that all the Churches under him may be provided of good and able Pastors: and that both of Pastors and people, conformity to Laws, and performance of their duties may be required, under penalties, not left to discretion, but by Law appointed.

SECT. II.

To this kind of Government, I am not by any particular interest so devoted, as to think it ought to be maintained, either in opposition to Apostolick Institution; or to the much desired reformation of mens lives, and restauration of Primitive discipline; or to any Law or Precept of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: for that were to maintain a means contrary to the end; for Obedience to our Saviour, is the end for which Church-Government is appointed. But if it may be *demonstrated* (or made much more probable than the contrary) as I verily think it may: I. That it is

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not repugnant to the government settled in and for the Church by the Apostles. II. That it is as complyable with the Reformation of any evil which we desire to reform either in Church or State, or the introduction of any good which we desire to introduce as any other kind of Government. And, III. That there is no Law, no Record of our Saviour against it. Then, I hope, it will not be thought an unreasonable Motion, if we humbly desire those that are in Authority, especially the High Court of Parliament, That it may not be sacrificed to Clamour, or over-born by Violence; and though (which God forbid) the greater part of the Multitude should cry, *Crucifie, Crucifie*; yet our Governours would be so full of Justice and Courage, as not to give it up, until they perfectly understand concerning Episcopacy it self, *Quid mali fecit*?

SECT. III.

I shall speak at this time only of the first of these three points: That Episcopacy is not repugnant to the Government settled in the Church for perpetuity by the Apostles. Whereof I conceive this which follows is as clear a Demonstration, as any thing of this nature is capable of.

That this Government was received universally in the Church, either in the Apostles time, or presently after, is so evident and unquestionable, that the most learned adversaries of this Government do themselves confess it.

SECT. IV.

Petrus Molinaus in his Book *De munere pastorali*, purposely written in defence of the Presbyterial-government, acknowledgeth: That presently after the Apostles times, or even in their time (as Ecclesiastical story witnesseth) it was ordained, That in every City one of the Presbytery should be called a Bishop, who should have pre-eminence over his Colleagues; to avoid confusion which oft times ariseth out of equality. And truly, this form of Government all Churches every where received.

SECT. V.

Theodorus Beza in his Tract, *De triplici Episcopatus genere*, confesseth in effect the same thing. For, having distinguished Episcopacy into three kinds, *Divine*, *Humane*, and *Satanical*; and attributing to the second (which he calls *Humane*, but we maintain and conceive to be *Apostolical*) not only a priority of Order, but a superiority of Power and Authority over other Presbyters, bounded yet by Laws and Canons provided against Tyranny: he clearly professeth that of this kind of Episcopacy, is to be understood whatsoever we read concerning the authority of Bishops (or Presidents, as *Justin Martyr* calls them) in *Ignatius*, and other more ancient Writers.

SECT. VI.

for many ages there was none. There was no Christian Emperour, no coercive power over the Church to enforce it. Or, if there had been any, we know no force was equal to the courage of the Christians of those times. Their lives were then as command (for they had no other way) to fight for Christ, but their obedience to any thing against his Law was not to be commanded (for they had perfectly learned to obey him). Therefore there was no power then to command this change; nor if there had been any, it had been in vain.

S E C T. IX.

What device then shall we study, or to what fountain shall we reduce this strange pretended alteration? Can it enter into our hearts to think, that all the Presbyters and other Christians then, being the Apostles Schollers, could be generally ignorant of the Will of Christ, touching the necessity of a Presbyterial Government? Or, dare we adventure to think them so strangely wicked all the World over, as against knowledge and conscience to conspire against it? Imagine the Spirit of Diabolus had entred into some, or a great many of the Presbyters, and possessed them with an ambitious desire of a forbidden superiority, was it possible they should attempt and achieve it once without any opposition or contradiction? and besides, that the contagion of this ambition, should spread it self and prevail without stop or controul; nay, without any noise or notice taken of it, through all the Churches in the World; all the watchmen in the mean time being so fast asleep, and all the dogs so dumb, that not so much as one should open his mouth against it?

S A C T. X.

But let us suppose (though it be a horrible untruth) that the Presbyters and people then, were not so good Christians as the Presbyterians are now; that they were generally so negligent to retain the government of Christ's Church commanded by Christ, which we now are so zealous to restore: yet certainly we must not forget nor deny, that they were men as we are. And if we look upon them but as meer natural men; yet, knowing by experience, how hard a thing it is, even for Policy arm'd with Power by many attempts and contrivances, and in a long time, to gain upon the liberty of any one people; undoubtedly we shall never entertain so wild an imagination, as that, among all the Christian Presbyteries in the World, neither conscience of duty, nor love of liberty, nor averiness from pride and usurpation of others over them, should prevail so much with any one, as to oppose this pretended universal invasion of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, and the liberty of Christians.

S E C T. XI.

for many ages there was none. There was no Christian Emperour, no
 executive power over the Church. **Section XI.** Of if there had been any
 we know no force was equal to the courage of the Christians of this
 When I shall see therefore all the Fables in the *Mosaic* *History* *and*
 and prove Stories; when I shall see all the Democracies in the
 in the Worldly down and sleep, and awake into Monarchies, then
 will I begin to believe that Presbyterial Government, having continued
 in the Church during the Apostles times, should presently (against
 the Apostles doctrine and the will of Christ) be whirld about like a scene
 in a masque, and transformed into Episcopacy. In the mean time, while
 these things remain thus incredible, and, in humane reason, impossible, I
 hope I shall have leave to conclude thus:

Episcopal Government is acknowledged to have been universally re-
 ceived in the Church, presently after the Apostles times.

Between the Apostles times and this presently after, there was not time
 enough for, nor possibility of, so great an alteration.

And therefore there was no such alteration as is pretended. And there-
 fore Episcopacy, being confessed to be so Ancient and Catholique,
 must be granted also to be Apostolique, *Quod erat demonstrandum.*

much as one should open the eyes of the people, and show them that the
 in the mean time being to let the people know that the Church
 rice taken of it through all the world, without any noise or no-
 less and prevail without a word, without any noise or no-
 tion; and besides that the Church was not in a condition to be
 should attempt and achieve a change of government, should be
 with an unanimous desire, a common consent, and a common
 should be granted also to be Apostolique, *Quod erat demonstrandum.*

But let us suppose (though it is a horrible absurdity) that the Pres-
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 and are now; that they were generally negligent to retain the go-
 vernment of Christ, which we now are
 to reason to tell us, yet we must not forget nor deny, that they
 were not as we are now. And if we consider them by as more natural
 men; yet, knowing how hard a thing it is, even for Ro-
 mick and with how many contrivances, and in a long
 time, to gain upon the people, and to change the Christian
 next certain to wild and dangerous, and among all the Christian
 Presbyteries in the World, such a violence of duty, not love of
 liberty, nor weakness, nor pride, and indignation of others over them,
 should prevail to much as to remove the people from this pretended
 universal invasion of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, and the liberty of
 Christian

FINIS.